

Cadaveric fungi: Not yet an established forensic tool – Authors' response

Dear Editor,

Determining postmortem interval (PMI) is a challenging task in forensic practice. We are pleased to find that our correspondence¹ has aroused interest from readers not only from forensic fraternity but in addition from different clinical disciplines.² The curiosity of the learned authors² would have been encouraging for the future of forensic mycology provided they had kept a pace with the recent advances in forensic entomology. This probably is the reason why an established science of forensic entomology has been underestimated and questioned by Rao et al.² We suggest to them to once again do a thorough literature search and review.

Without a doubt, the letter by Rao et al.² reflects their lack of knowledge on forensic entomology. Further we are all aware that despite of limitations, forensic entomology has been helpful to forensic fraternity in the estimation of PMI. Ishii et al.³ and Hitosugi et al.⁴ cited by Rao et al. are misquoted as they nowhere mention what has been actually quoted in their entire correspondence.²

Although it is not necessary for us¹ to further discuss and elaborate on the two preliminary cases published by Ishii et al.³ and Hitosugi et al.⁴ it is obvious that the authors² have not gone through our correspondence in detail. Hence, we wish to clarify that our viewpoints were focused on the concluding remarks of Hitosugi et al. in the case report section of their article.⁴ We only seek the validity of the statement that postmortem interval of about 10 days was based on fungal evidence. Hitosugi et al.⁴ have quoted the published evidence of fungal growth as “in life circumstances, fungi generally colonize 3–7 days after attaching on the subjects”. The conclusion of postmortem interval of 10 days is critically questionable because the evidence mentioned in earlier studies as cited by Hitosugi et al. is in regard to living circumstances which cannot be equated with cadavers. Moreover, the environmental conditions wherein the cadavers were found are absolutely different from those related to living conditions and hence, not comparable.

We fail to understand that while our article is focused on the current status of forensic mycology with a mention of two recent case reports, how the authors² felt that we have highlighted the effect based on those articles. We had earlier tried to highlight on the importance of forensic mycology⁵ and had put a caution before recognizing it as an established forensic tool.¹ It is disappointing to find that not only our article has been poorly understood but also misinterpreted by Rao et al.²

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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